

FRED: So I'd have to squeeze up behind you and put my arms around you?

MARTY: Maybe you'd better buy one of your own.

FRED: Gladys would kill me if I even thought about buying a motorcycle. In fact she probably knows I'm thinking about one now. She can sense things like that, it's scary. So when are you getting it?

MARTY: It's just a matter of time my friend, I even have one picked out.

FRED: A motorcycle... that is so wild!

Lights down on coffee shop, lights up on Gladys and Deb in the living room. They are having a glass of wine. The switch should be very quick so Gladys's line comes right on the heels of Fred's last line.

GLADYS: A motorcycle? That is so stupid!

DEB: You're telling me!

GLADYS: At his age, is he insane?

DEB: That's what I said too... except for the "at his age" part, he can be kinda sensitive about that.

GLADYS: Well, I hope you knocked that idea out of his head.

DEB: I was going to but he was wearing a helmet. What I *am* doing is subtly guiding him in a different direction. He's going to delay buying it until he finishes the woodworking course.

GLADYS: Just delay? What happens when he actually buys it?

DEB: He *thinks* he wants a motorcycle but what he really wants is something he can get involved with again and a motorcycle is the first thing that popped into his man-brain. He'll forget all about it. Woodworking will eventually fill the void left when he retired.

GLADYS: You're sure this will work?

DEB: I'm working the long game.

GLADYS: You're a genius! So, wanting a motorcycle was just a symptom of what ailed him. Wish I could figure out what ails Fred.

- DEB: Just about everything from what I can tell.
- GLADYS: If only he just wanted a motorcycle. At least then he wouldn't be afraid of encountering "foreign germs" and we could enjoy ourselves a bit. We always talked about Venice but it looks like that's out the window now.
- DEB: What is it with men? Marty retires and wants to ride off on a Harley, Fred retires and becomes a human petri dish. Why can't they just... I don't know... read a book!
- GLADYS: I read that a lot of marriages break up after retirement, that some people can't stand the thought of spending every day with the person they've been avoiding through work for the last thirty years.
- DEB: Where did you read that?
- GLADYS: Cosmo. Don't tell anybody but I actually bought it for the article "Fifty Red Hot Secrets for Mind Blowing Sex"
- DEB: Fifty?
- GLADYS: I know, who knew there were that many. But most of them are just common sense.

Deb stares quizzically at Gladys.

What?

- DEB: Nothing, I'm just impressed, that's all. *(pause)* Are you and Fred ok? I mean, you're not one of those who...
- GLADYS: No, no, we're fine, I *want* to spend time with him. Maybe not every last second. He follows me around like a puppy dog, there has to be a happy medium.
- DEB: Marty seems a little confused. Apparently he's "lost" and thinks a motorcycle will take him to wherever he's supposed to be. *(pause)* What if he goes there without me?
- GLADYS: What's going on?
- DEB: Nothing really. Everything seems fine, but I can't help worrying. You hear so much about ... well, what you read in Cosmo. Marty's been feeling lost since he retired, he wants to be "alone on the open road" and now, he doesn't want me to take the woodworking course with him.
- GLADYS: You asked him and he said no?

Deb nods

- GLADYS: Don't read too much into that, guys can be possessive about hobbies.
- DEB: Maybe you're right. I guess I just want us to stay connected.
- GLADYS: But woodworking? Why would you want to do that?
- DEB: It might be fun to saw some lumber, hammer some nails, make a mess. Why not?
- GLADYS: I can think of one reason.
- DEB: What?
- GLADYS: You'll saw your hand off.

Lights down , End of Scene Five

ACT ONE SCENE 6 \

Place: A woodworking classroom

Time: The next evening

Fred and Marty are in the woodworking classroom. (Two Black and Decker Workmates or something similar in a pool of light). They are both sanding pieces of wood secured in the Workmates. Both are wearing red plaid flannel shirts. Fred is wearing safety goggles and a hard hat with hearing protection attached.

MARTY: Fred, hand me that thing over there.

Fred doesn't answer.

MARTY: *(louder)* Fred!

FRED: What?

MARTY: Take those things off, how much noise can you make sanding?

Fred removes the hard hat.

MARTY: How did you come up with this?
FRED: You can learn a lot about something when your heart is in it.
MARTY: Are you sure this will work?
FRED: No, but it's worth a try
MARTY: I can barely understand this and I'm supposed to build it?
FRED: That's why I'm here buddy!

Lights down, End of Scene Three

ACT TWO SCENE 4

Time: Ten days later

Place: The coffee shop 3

Deb and Gladys walk into the coffee shop each with a paper cup of coffee and sit at the table.

DEB: Has Fred said anything?
GLADYS: No, apparently the "cloak of secrecy" is up again. They've been working on it for a week and a half now and not a word, he just comes home and tracks sawdust into the house.
DEB: They must think we'll talk them out of it. How bad do you think it is?
GLADYS: How much worse could it be than a coffin?
DEB: To think I was worried about a lopsided coffee table. Now I'm hoping it is a lopsided coffee table.
GLADYS: You'll soon find out, the big reveal is coming tomorrow evening. But I'll tell you something, whatever it is they're building, Fred is the happiest I've seen him since he retired. He hasn't changed the furnace air filter in over three weeks.

DEB: Marty's been pretty silent about the motorcycle. It was weird, suddenly this mild mannered man... don't tell him I called him that... wants a Harley Davidson.

GLADYS: Men can go a little strange when they retire, I've heard that before. Something to do with their whole identity being wrapped up in their job. Why would they let that happen? We didn't.

DEB: No, but didn't you find it a *little* difficult after you retired?

GLADYS: I did, I missed helping people. Remember how restless I was until I went back to the hospital as a volunteer? Maybe it's because I'm there on my own terms that makes a difference, but I'm loving it.

DEB: Clubs, that's what saved me. I really missed the work relationships. You know, it's all about how difficult it is for men after they retire, but it was just as difficult for us.

GLADYS: Got that right, and we didn't go all wonky like the men did.

DEB: Well, there was that one class we took...

GLADYS: That was an accident!

DEB: Are you sure?

GLADYS: Yes I'm sure, and I wanted to leave as soon as we found out.

DEB: No, I'm the one who wanted to leave; you had to talk me into staying.

GLADYS: Which class are you remembering?

DEB: Obviously not the same one you're remembering.

GLADYS: Well it has to be, 'cause that's the only class we took.

Lights fade on the bistro table (coffee shop) as we go into a flash back scene from three years ago. Lights up on an art studio. two artists easels in a pool of light, or the easels can be placed in front of the bistro table. Deb and Gladys are each holding a sketch pad. They stand behind their easels facing the audience.

DEB: I don't know why I let you talk me into this. I can't draw to save my life.

GLADYS: Well that's the point isn't it, we're going to learn how to draw. It's another skill set for the tool box.